

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of dispensing a product from a vending machine using a cellular telephone, the vending machine comprising (a) a retrieving device for obtaining a product from the vending machine, (b) a communication device connected to a communication network, and (c) a dispensing device for dispensing the product from the vending machine, the method comprising:

receiving, at the communication device at a start of the method, a signal from that corresponds to a call from the a cellular telephone at a start of the method, the signal for establishing in order to establish a network connection to between the communication device and the cellular telephone, where the network connection can be established only if there is product in the vending machine to be dispensed the network connection enabling the vending machine to dispense the product;

issuing a response message from the communication device in reply to the signal, the response message indicating which indicates that the network connection has been established between the cellular telephone and the vending machine prior to dispensing the product;

outputting an audible message for use in selecting the product from the vending machine, the audible message comprising a menu;

receiving, at the retrieving device, information indicating that the product has been selected following output of the audible message; and

dispensing the product ~~in response to~~ via the dispensing device based on the information
~~after the connection has been established.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

outputting a cost of the product from the vending machine; and

debiting an account for the cost to pay for the product.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the response message comprises a visual indication that is displayed on the cellular telephone.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the response message is audible and comprises an audio indication that is presented via the cellular telephone.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~response is issued and the signal is received over~~ communication network comprises a mobile communications network.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

monitoring an amount of the product in the vending machine; and

outputting an indication when the vending machine is out of a product.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for dispensing a product, comprising:

a transceiver which ~~first~~ receives a signal that corresponds to a call from a cellular telephone, the signal for establishing in order to establish a network connection to between the transceiver and the cellular telephone, where the network connection can be established only if there is product in the apparatus that can be dispensed, the connection enabling the apparatus to dispense the product ~~the transceiver issuing a response message in reply to the signal, the response message indicating which indicates~~ that the network connection has been established ~~between the cellular telephone and the apparatus prior to dispensing the product;~~

a retrieving device which receives information indicative of the product after the network connection has been established, and which generates an output signal based on the information; and

a dispensing device which dispenses the product in response to the output signal information and when the connection has been established; wherein the retrieving device receives the information via the cellular telephone or via the apparatus following output of an audible menu.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the transceiver outputs a cost of the product.

9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response message comprises a visual indication for display on the cellular telephone.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response message is audible and is presented comprises an audio indication for presentation via the cellular telephone.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response is issued and the signal is received over network connection is via a mobile communications network.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising:
an inventory monitoring device which monitors an amount of the product in the vending machine apparatus and which generates an output signal indicating that the vending machine apparatus is out of the product, wherein the transceiver outputs the output signal.

13. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:
a communications network;
a first communication device connected to the a communications network; and
a vending machine comprising:
a retrieving device for obtaining a product from the vending machine;
a second communication device connected to the communications network; and
a dispensing device for dispensing the product from the vending machine;
wherein the first communication device first sends initiates a call to the second communication device over the communications network, the call corresponding to a signal for establishing in order to establish a network connection to between the first communication

device and the second communication device, where the network connection can be established only if there is product in the vending machine to be dispensed; the connection enabling the vending machine to dispense the product in connection with use of the first communication device, and the second communication device issues a signal to the first communication device indicating that the connection has been established prior to dispensing the product

wherein the second communication device issues a response message in reply to the signal, the response message indicating that the network connection has been established;

wherein the retrieving device receives information indicative of the product and generates an output signal based on the information;

wherein the dispensing device dispenses the product in response to the output signal, and

wherein the retrieving device receives the information via the first communication device or via the vending machine following output of an audible menu.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the first communication device comprises a telephone.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the telephone comprises a cellular telephone.

16. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the second communication device comprises a transceiver.

17. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the communications network comprises a mobile radio network.

18. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the communications network comprises:
a telephone network; and
a gateway server that connects the vending machine to the telephone network.

19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein a code number is associated with the vending machine and the first communication device establishes the network connection to the second communication device using the code number.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 13, wherein the vending machine further comprises an inventory monitoring system for monitoring the inventory of the product.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the inventory monitoring system outputs a signal when the vending machine is out of the product.

22. (Cancelled)

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23. (New) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the apparatus comprises a vending machine.